Early Reader

Tulsa goes to the Ball

Written and illustrated by

Tony Ross

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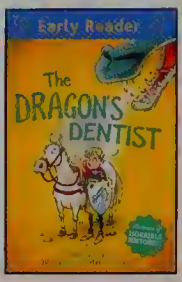

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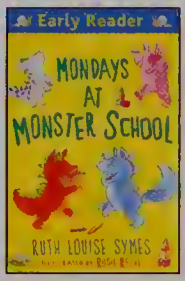

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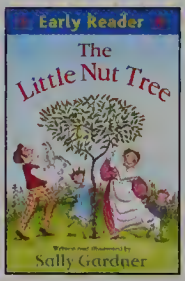

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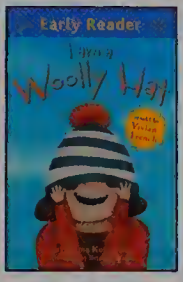

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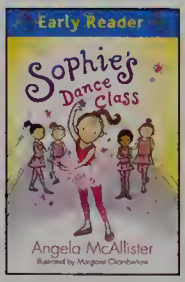

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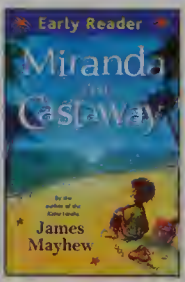

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Tulsa goes to the Ball

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Tony Ross

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CINDERELLA

"Tulsa, you mucky pup!"
Mum said.

"Have you seen the state of your bedroom? It looks as if the seven dwarves, the three bears, and the forty thieves had a party in there.

It's a mess! Clean it up please."

Tulsa frowned. Only this morning, Mum had asked her to have a bath, and then, on top of that, told her to clean her teeth!

She snorted, "I have to do
everything around here."

Tulsa stamped up the stairs. She stamped as loudly as she could, so that everyone could hear that she was doing what she was told.

Looking round her room, Tulsa couldn't see what all the fuss was about. The room looked perfectly tidy to her.

It always looked like this,
and she knew exactly where
everything was.

Tulsa banged about for a few minutes, so the noise would make Mum think that she actually was doing some tidying.

Then she flung herself onto her bed, and chose a book from the ones she kept under her pillow.

"Just right for me!" she said out loud.

"Why?" said a squeaky voice from her clean pants drawer.

The voice belonged to Tulsa's talking frog. The frog was one of those frogs, who when kissed, would turn into a handsome prince.

The thing was, Tulsa didn't like the idea of kissing a frog.

"Why is that book just right for you?" insisted the frog.

"Because it is about a girl who has to do all the work around the house, just like me!

That's why she is called
Cinderella, because she has to
clean out all the cinders."

"Really?" said the frog.

"Yes, really." said Tulsa. "I'm **just** like Cinderella. From now on, you can call me Cindy."

"OK, Cindy, give us a kiss, and I'll be your handsome prince."

"Errr, not yet," said Cindy, who liked the idea of having a pet with good conversation.

"I'd like you to do something for me first."

"And what might that be?" said the frog.

"Have you ever read Cinderella?" asked Tulsa.

"No," replied the frog. "Until I met you, I lived in a pond. I might be able to talk, but I can't read."

"Well, Cinderella is about a girl who has to do all the work, and her ugly sisters did nothing at all.

While Cinderella was doing all the work, the ugly sisters were invited to a wonderful ball, thrown by a handsome prince."

"That sounds like me," said the frog.

"Anyway, Cinderella couldn't go to the ball, because of all the washing up, and then she had to tidy her room.

The prince was upset, because he really wanted to dance with Cinderella."

"Gosh!" said the frog.

"Then along came a fairy godmother, who fixed it so Cinderella could go to the ball. She changed her rags into a beautiful dress, a pumpkin into a carriage, and mice into horses."

"How?" breathed the frog.

"Because she was enchanted."

"Like me!" squealed the frog.

"Exactly like you," said Tulsa, nodding.

"Where is all this leading?" muttered the frog.

"Well," said Tulsa, "I want **you** to take **me** to the ball!"

"What ball?" said the frog.

"The enchanted ball," said Tulsa.

"I don't know what you are talking about," said the frog.

"But you are an enchanted frog. You **should** know what to do!" snapped Tulsa. "It's easy, you get a pumpkin, or I suppose any vegetable would do, and you change it into a beautiful coach."

The frog blinked.

"Then," went on Tulsa, "you change yourself into a fine white pony and take me to the ball."

"I can't do that!" gasped the frog. "If I could change myself into things, I would have turned into a handsome prince years ago."

"Then," Tulsa went on, "you must change my jeans and top into a wonderful ball gown."

"I'm a FROG!" said the frog, "I can talk, but mainly I croak, and swim. I will jump for you if you like, but I can't do all those other things."

"I'm Cindy," said Tulsa, "and you are a magic frog. Take me to the ball."

The frog knew that there was no point in arguing. He thought for a moment, then said sadly, "Alright, I will take you to the ball. You will have to pretend the coach and all that, and I can't do anything about the dress."

"OK," said Tulsa. "I will go as I am."

She burrowed in her pocket and pulled out a pink ribbon, and tied it round the frog's neck."

"What do you think you are doing?" squeaked the frog.

"I am pretending you are a fine white pony, and I am in a coach, and I am wearing a beautiful gown." said Tulsa. "Giddy up! Take me to the ball."

The frog hopped out of Tulsa's room, and down the stairs, through the kitchen and out into the garden.

The royal coach had to stop, while Tulsa opened the gate onto the lane.

As they went down the lane, Tulsa waved to cheering crowds, and the frog did his best to be a fine white pony.

The coach jumped over the stile, and around the cornfield. The pony stopped to catch his breath by the church.

"Are we nearly there?" said Tulsa. She was getting excited now. The frog did know the way to the enchanted ball.

"Not far now," wheezed the frog, heading for a little clump of trees.

He came to a halt by a pond. It was the pond that he was born in, the pond where he used to live, before the clean pants drawer.

"Why have we stopped here?" asked Tulsa.

"Why, Your Majesty, Princess Cindy, we are at the ball!" said the frog, proudly.

Tulsa looked around in amazement. "I can't see any ball," she said.

"There!" squealed the frog, pointing to the edge of the pond. "There's your ball."

Tulsa blinked. Bobbing about in the rushes, was the old football that she had lost in the spring. There it was, her favourite ball.

She grabbed it, and dried it off on her tee shirt. She danced about, hugging it.

"My very best ball, from Uncle Alan!" she cooed happily, "I wondered where that was!"

"It's the only ball I know about," said the frog.

"Now, how about a kiss?"

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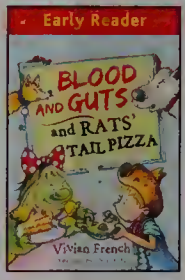

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Tulsa has to do all the work around the house, just like Cinderella. But if she **WAS** Cinderella, wouldn't she go to a magic ball?

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